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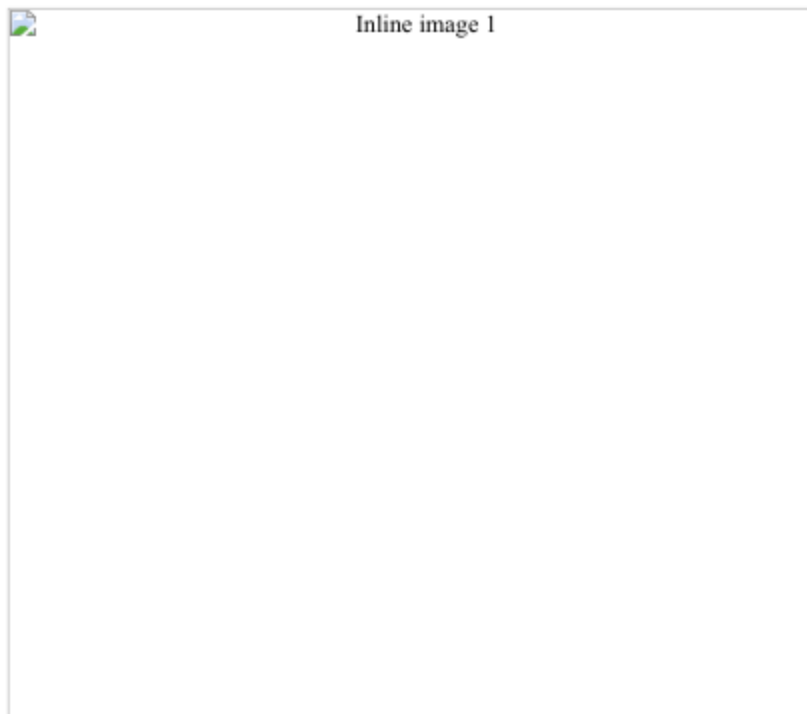
Subject: Greg Brown's Weekend Reading and Other Things.... 04/27/2014

Date: Sun, 27 Apr 2014 07:33:37 +0000

Attachments: These_Maps_Show_Just_How_Segregated_New_York_City_Really_Is_Christopher_Mathais_Huff_Post_04_15_2014.docx;
The_Harlem_Globetrotters_bio.docx;
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2014.docx; McCutcheon_and_the_New_Banana_Republic_Norm_Ornstein_The_Atlantic_April_17,_2014.docx;
Racial_Equality_Loses_at_the_Court_NYT_Editorial_Board_04_22_2014.docx;
Some_Countries_Realize_You_Have_A_Life_Outside_Work_The_U.S._Isn't_One_Of_Them_Harry_Bradford_Huff_Post_04_18_2014.2.docx; Lucio_Dalla_bio.docx

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DEAR FRIEND.....



One of the greatest and most underrated sports teams in the world for more than eight decades is *the world-wide ambassadors of basketball* the legendary **Harlem Globetrotters** who have played in over 122 countries for more than 120 million fans, scoring over 20,000 victories with only 332 losses. They surpass every other team in the history of sports for number of games played. Today they are best known for their wildly-entertaining comedic routines and ball-handling skills on the court, and of course that famous song, **"Sweet Georgia Brown."** But the Harlem Globetrotters have a long history of serious basketball play and their beginnings were modest and for decades they were the best basketball team in the world and although they are not what they once was they are still making magic on the basketball court. In fact the style of the NBA today with its slam dunks, hook shots, no-look passing and superb ball handing goes straight back to style of play created by the Harlem Globetrotters....

The Globetrotters were the creation of Abe Saperstein of Chicago, who took over business and coaching duties in 1927 for a team of African-American neighborhood players originally known as the **Savoy Big Five** (after the famous Chicago's **Savoy Ballroom** where they played their early games). At a time when only whites were allowed to play on professional basketball teams. Saperstein who was white, took over the booking and management duties as it was easier for him to negotiate with the white venue owners in the Midwest and The South. But Saperstein (*the [REDACTED] Barnum of basketball and sports entertainment in the United States*) genius was to promote his new team's racial makeup by naming first Globetrotters (*to get them an exotic ring*) and then **Harlem Globetrotters**, after the famous African-American neighborhood of New York City. The son of a tailor, Saperstein sewed their red, white and blue uniforms (emblazoned with the words "New York") himself. The lineup in that first game, for which the Globetrotters were paid \$75, was Walter "Toots" Wright, Byron "Fat" Long, Willis "Kid" Oliver, Andy Washington and Al "Runt" Pullins.

The Globetrotters won 101 out of 117 games that first season and introduced many Midwestern audiences to a game they had not seen played before. In 1934 Saperstein took over the ownership of the team and continued to coach, manage, be the publicist and sometimes even substitute player, working overtime to book games for his team. And by 1934, eight years after their founding, the Globetrotters had played 1,000 games. This was quite a feat for an all-black team at the time — professional teams were “whites only.” Initially the Globetrotters only appeared in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Michigan, Montana, Washington and North and South Dakota often eating and living in buses, traveling from town to town, being denied accommodations in this jim-crow era. (*The Globetrotters didn't actually play a game in Harlem until 1968.*) Their first national championship appearance came in 1939, when the Globetrotters lost to the *New York Renaissance*. During a regular season game they were leading an opponent 112 to 5. The lead was so outrageous that it made for a boring game, so team members entertained themselves and the crowd by being a little silly. That same year, the team began to add the silly antics they later became known for, including ball handling tricks and on-court comedic routines. The crowds loved it, and Saperstein told his team to keep up the clowning around, but only when they had achieved a solid lead.

Saving their comic routines for strong-lead games, the Globetrotters continued serious ball play. 1946 saw both the team's first overseas trip to the US Territory of Hawaii, and the establishment of the **National Basketball Association (NBA)**, which was a “whites only” league that allowed game play against the all-black Globetrotters. A turning point came when the NBA broke their “whites only” ruling in 1950, and began to draft black players. This made it more difficult for Saperstein to keep the competitive edge in the Globetrotters, as many black players began to receive flashy offers from the NBA. And despite their world-class hoop skills the Globetrotters were not recognized as a world-class team. That honor went to the “all white” teams in the NBL and the BAA, the segregated predecessors of the NBA. But in February 1948 the all-black Globetrotters got to face the all-white National Champions, the Minneapolis Lakers. The Lakers represented white basketball, discipline, efficient, precision and orchestrated. As such, conventional wisdom said that no way the clowns on the Globetrotters could compete against the NBA Champions. What race, whose style would prevail and which athletes would make up America's greatest basketball team? With 18,000 fans screaming for their teams. The Globetrotters won by one basket. But many white sports fans saw the Globetrotters win as a fluke. But a rematch in 1949 was no joke, as the Globetrotters beat the Lakers handily and beat them so badly that the Trotters began to clown to make the game interesting and fun. This caused many to begin to ask why aren't any African Americans playing in the NBA.

1950 was a tremendous year for the Globetrotters as they played to standing room only crowds in Madison Square Garden. In 1951, the Globetrotters were called upon by the US State Department to help counteract a communist youth rally in East Germany. They played in the Allied section of Berlin to an enthusiastic crowd. From this point on, the Globetrotters toured internationally and would also, throughout the 50s, continuously compete against NBA teams. In following years they played for three different popes, for the Hollywood cameras during the making of the 1951 film *“The Harlem Globetrotters,”* on the *Ed Sullivan show* and for sold-out crowds in the USSR and Eastern Europe. In 1958, they won their ninth-straight **World Series of Basketball**, and in 1959 they achieved their 7,000th career game and finished the season undefeated. They had risen to become one of the finest basketball teams in the world. After the Globetrotters embarrassed the World Champion Lakers twice, NBA teams were ready to draft black players and in 1950 Nat Sweetwater Clifton became the first black player in the NBA when he signed with the New York Knicks in 1950, breaking Saperstein's monopoly on black basketball talent. And as the NBA began drafting black players Saperstein made a radical bet by shifting his sights overseas to Europe, Asia, South America and Africa making the Globetrotters the first team to ever play before one million people in a single season.

But the highest moment internationally might have been in 1951 when the Soviet Union organized a Communist Youth Rally in Berlin, they invited the Harlem Globetrotters to play in Berlin's **Olympic Stadium** in front of 75,000 fans, the largest crowd to ever watch a basketball game. At halftime a US Army helicopter landed in the stadium delivering Jessie Owens (the track star hero who had been stabbed by Hitler during the 1936 Olympics). The Mayor of Berlin, motioned to Jessie Owens and Saperstein to come over to him and he said, “*sixteen years ago on this very spot Hitler refused to give you his hand, today I give you both of mine.*” The crowd went crazy as the Globetrotters not only crossed the color line they had now mended international relations between countries that been at war against each other seven years earlier.

By the time owner Abe Saperstein passed away in 1966, the Globetrotters had played 8,945 games, in more than 1,200 cities and 82 foreign countries. They were known as serious athletes, but their image was evolving towards an entertainment troupe and national icon. And at a time of evolving Black consciousness, to many young African Americans their clowning antics seem out of step. Still, the Globetrotters continued touring around the world to many times stadium crowds while expanding their white audience here in America. This reached a height during CBS's 1970s production of a cartoon called *“The Harlem Globetrotter Show”* — later *“The Harlem Globetrotter Popcorn Machine”* show — and with Globetrotter “appearances” on *Scooby-Doo*. President Gerald Ford called them *“America's Ambassadors of Goodwill.”* In the '80s they were given a star on the **Hollywood Walk of Fame** and the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American Social History opened a permanent exhibit honoring them. In 1985, the Globetrotters signed the first woman to play official basketball with men, Olympic gold medalist Lynette Woodard. In 1996 two Globetrotters, Michael “Wild Thing” Wilson and Fred “Preacher” Smith set a **Guinness World Record** for dunking at 11 feet and 8 inches.

Today there are at least three different Harlem Globetrotters teams touring the country and the 2014 season has the highest ticket sales ever. In September of 2002 the Harlem Globetrotters were inducted into the **Basketball Hall of Fame**. They continue to entertain across the country and, more recently, in an effort to gain back some of their serious ball-playing reputation, they have scheduled games against college teams and pick-up teams like *Magic Johnson's All Stars*. *“Sweet Georgia Brown”* is still playing and so are the **Harlem Globetrotters**. And if you have never seen the Harlem Globetrotters, I strongly urge that you do, as it will be

an enjoyable evening, even if you don't know anything about basketball. I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of the great Harlem Globetrotter players including Reece "Goose" Tatum, Marques Haynes, Wilt "The Stilt" Chamberlain (*who played point guard*), Connie "The Hawk" Hawkins, Nat "Sweetwater" Clifton, Meadow "Meadowlark" Lemon, Fred "Curly" Neal and Lynette Woodard who became the first female Globetrotter. And probably the greatest thing that one can say about the Harlem Globetrotters is that after the game almost no one remembers the score but everyone is smiling.

Plutocracy Versus Democracy



There truly is a class war in America today that goes unnoticed because it is obfuscated by prejudice and misinformation. We are told that the difference today is between the Conservatives and the Liberals. And when that doesn't work, we are told that it is the rich and the poor and if you are a cynic the haves and the have-nots. And depending on where you are on the economic ladder, it's the top 1% versus the 47%. But the real class war in America is about entitlement and I am not talking about Social Security or Medicare or Food Assistance Programs or Welfare for the poor. I am not even talking about the bailout of the big banks that saved Wall Street. I don't even mean the entitlement that the wealth of the country trickles down instead of percolating upward. I am talking about the naked grab for power and control by a few in pursuit of their own self-interest. I am talking about investment bankers, corporate executives and political pundits who truly believe that they contribute more to society than firefighters, teachers, nurses and police men and women and how the money of a few now manipulates our electorate, and that they really believe that this is their prerogative.

As a result of the new donor class in politics today, the system is rigged in favor of the wealthy. The historian Plutarch warned us long ago of what happens when there is no brake on the power of great wealth to subvert the electorate. *"The abuse of buying and selling votes,"* he wrote of Rome, *"crept in and money began to play an important part in determining elections. Later on, this process of corruption spread in the law courts and to the army, and finally, when even the sword became enslaved by the power of gold, the republic was subjected to the rule of emperors."*

We may not have a ruling class per se but we do have a Senate in which, as a study by the political scientist Larry Bartels revealed, *"Senators appear to be considerably more responsive to the opinions of affluent constituents than to the opinions of middle-class constituents, while the opinions of constituents in the bottom third of the income distribution have no apparent statistical effect on their senators' roll call votes."* We also have a House of Representatives controlled by the far right that is now nourished by streams of *"dark money"* unleashed thanks to the gift bestowed on the rich by the Supreme Court in the Citizens United case. As a result, one of our two major parties is now dominated by radicals engaged in a crusade of voter suppression aimed at the elderly, the young, minorities and the poor; while the other party, once the champion of everyday working people, has been so enfeebled by its own collaboration with the donor class that it offers only token resistance to the forces that have demoralized everyday Americans.

Writing in the **Guardian** recently, the social critic George Monbiot commented, *"So I don't blame people for giving up on politics... When a state-corporate nexus of power has bypassed democracy and made a mockery of the voting process, when an unreformed political system ensures that parties can be bought and sold, when politicians [of the main parties] stand and watch as public services are divvied up by a grubby cabal of privateers, what is left of this system that inspires us to participate?"* And whether you want to hear it or not, today there is the shredding of the social contract. Ten years ago **the Economist magazine** — no friend of Marxism — warned: *"The United States risks calcifying into a European-style class-based society."* And as a recent headline in the **Columbia Journalism Review** put it: *"The line between democracy and a darker social order is thinner than you think."* We are close to losing our democracy to the mercenary class. So close it's as if we're leaning way over the rim of the Grand Canyon waiting for a swift wind to take us airborne.

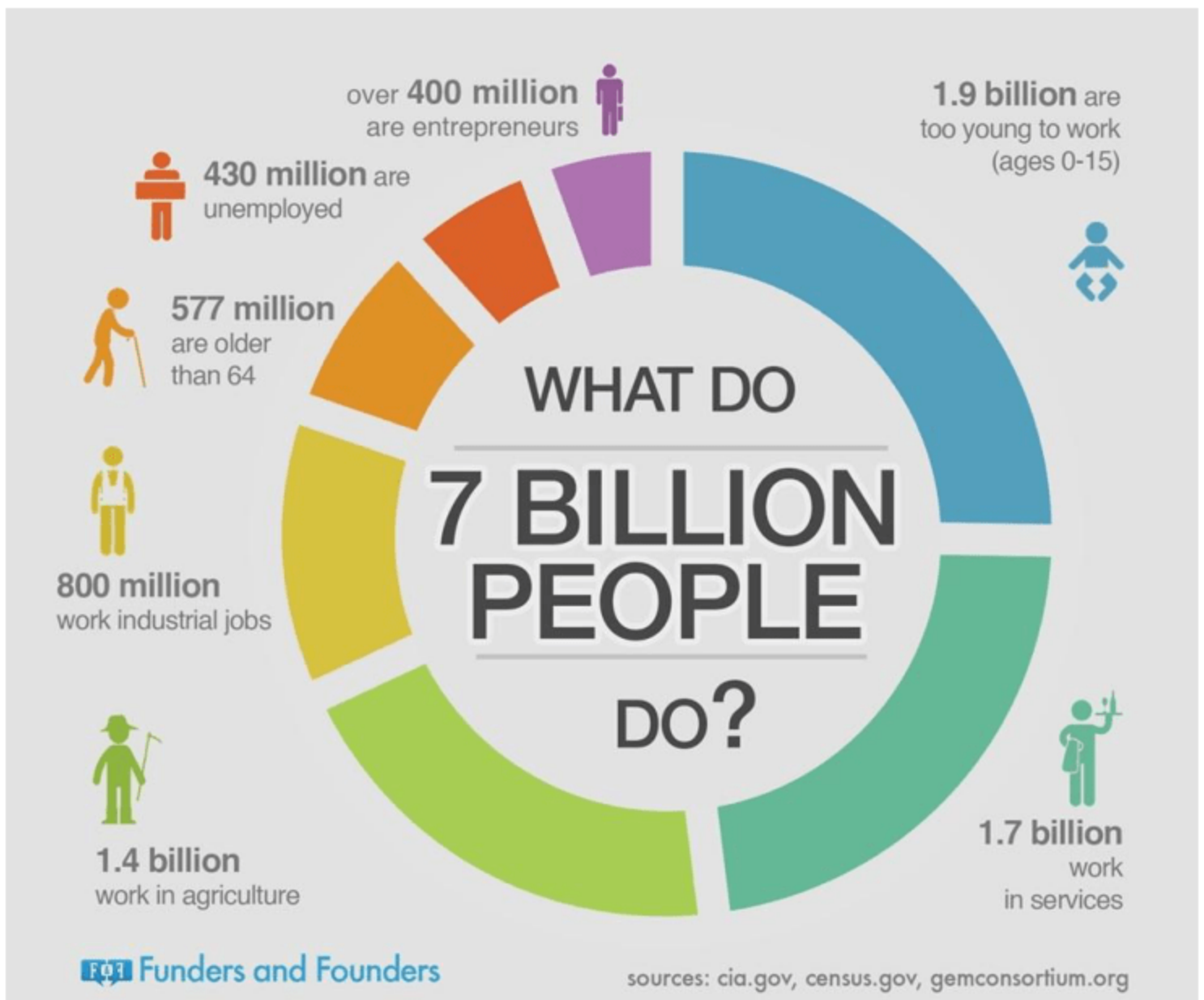
Twenty years ago, when Supreme Court Justice William J. Brennan was asked how he had come to his liberal sentiments. *"It was my neighborhood,"* he said. Born to Irish immigrants in 1906, as the harsh indignities of the Gilded Age brought hardship and deprivation to his kinfolk and neighbors, he saw *"all kinds of suffering — people had to struggle."* He never forgot those people or their struggles, and he believed it to be our collective responsibility to create a country where they would have a fair chance to a decent life. *"If you doubt it,"* he said, *"read the Preamble [to the Constitution]."* This current generation doesn't acknowledge that they had a neighborhood. Many believe that it was just their ingenuity and hard work that got them to the place where they are today. As such they often feel that they owe others nothing.

People forget the Great Depression and prior to the creation of the safety net. People forget the era when millions of children had to school in the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grades because they were needed in the fields to pick cotton or work in factories to help support their families. People forget when Franklin Roosevelt was President and tens of millions of Americans listened to his radio "fireside chats" as if they were gospel; or the 1950s and 1960s when our parents and older siblings went to college on the GI Bill; and were the beneficiary of public schools, public libraries, public parks, public roads and two public universities. How could you now think that these things were not good and how could you think that Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid not good. And for African Americans like myself, the Voting Rights Act and the Equal Rights Amendment. Or maybe they were born after these events, which is why they see little value in these achievements and the services that they provide.

In one way or another, plutocracy versus democracy is the oldest story in America: the struggle to determine whether "*we, the people*" is a moral compact embedded in a political contract or merely a charade masquerading as piety and manipulated by the powerful and privileged to sustain their own way of life at the expense of others. One doesn't have to harbor any idealized notion of politics and democracy. Because there is nothing idealized or romantic about the difference between a society whose arrangements roughly serve all its citizens (something otherwise known as social justice) and one whose institutions have been converted into a stupendous fraud. That can be the difference between democracy and plutocracy.

Toward the end of Justice Brennan's tenure on the Supreme Court, he made a speech that went to the heart of the matter. He said: "*We do not yet have justice, equal and practical, for the poor, for the members of minority groups, for the criminally accused, for the displaced persons of the technological revolution, for alienated youth, for the urban masses... Ugly inequities continue to mar the face of the nation. We are surely nearer the beginning than the end of the struggle.*" One hundred and fifty years ago, Abraham Lincoln stood on the blood-soaked battlefield of Gettysburg and called Americans to "*the great task remaining.*" That "*unfinished work,*" as he named it, remained the same then as it was when America's founding generation began it. And it remains the same today, as we and every generation has to breathe new life into the promise of the Declaration of Independence to assure that the country and its democracy continues for all. Enough of the platitudes (even if they are mine) because when I was growing up there was a saying for these types of people, "*they don't realize that their shit stinks*" and if you can't smell your own feces and don't look down around you will end up stepping in your own shit. And that's how we ended up in stupid wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

What Do 7 Billion People Do?



Really puts things in perspective doesn't it. !

 Rancher Cliven Bundy speaks during a news conference near his ranch on April 24, 2014 in Bunkerville, Nev.

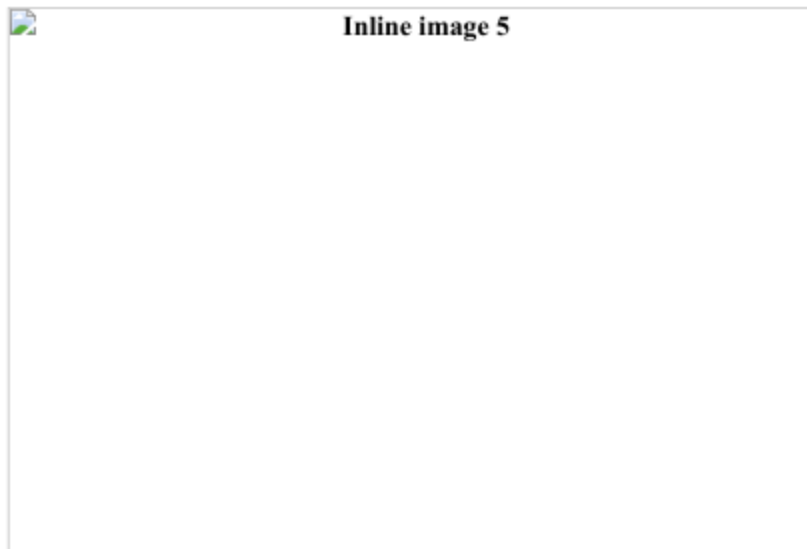
As you have probably heard by now the Conservatives who have been backing Cliven Bundy the anti-government rancher in Nevada who became the latest cause celeb of the far right have abandoned him in droves as a result of his latest comments, saying that some of the negroes he sees today are better off as slaves. *"I wanted to tell you one more thing I know about the Negroes. When I go through Las Vegas, North Las Vegas and I would see these little government houses. And in front of government house, the door was usually open and the old people and the kids - and there is always at least a half dozen people sitting on the porch. They didn't have nothing to do. They didn't have nothing for the young girls to do. And because they are basically on government subsidy, and know what do they do? They abort their young children, they put their young man in jail, because they never learn how to pick cotton. I've often wondered, are they better off as slaves picking cotton and having a family life and doing things, or are they better off under government subsidy? They got less freedom."*

The absolute irony is that Bundy who owes the government more than a million dollars in grazing fees has the audacity to disparage African Americans living in government subsidized housing. What is difficult to convey in writing is the phonetics of his pronunciation as he slurs the word Negro to the point of "niggar." The truth is that this unveils the ugly side of anti-government, anti-federalist ideologies in America that often times reflect the views of people who also happen to be racist. And let's throw in birtherism. As all of these are offensive. To hear it, to see it and to read it.

This is not to say that all Conservatives or Tea Party supporters are racist but there is a sort of intersection between racism, white supremacy, current militia secessionist movements and the fiercest strain of anti-government sentiment and nobody should be surprised. And it should not be a surprise by efforts to marginalize him as just an aberration by his former supporters, as it is this toxic undercurrent that has long fed the ideology of these folk. So it is no surprise when someone like Bundy says publicly what many of these people say to each other privately.

Racism doesn't have to be overt. So when you hear major political figures and media types on the far-right talk about the President being illegitimate we know what that means, and the government being lawless we know exactly what that means, as it feeds the rhetoric of hatred on the far-right. And the fact that most of the Republican figures including Rand Paul and Ted Cruz are trying to walk back their support for Bundy with his beef against the Bureau of Land Management and are now denouncing his racist comments is not enough. It is the culture of racist rhetoric and self-righteousness within this part of the Conservative movement that is often ignored by the leadership as it is both a disease and a disgrace but there is no amount of walking back that can change the fact that these politicians are pandering to these ugly fringe elements for their own political agenda.

Remember that Bundy doesn't believe in The Federal Government. *"I abide by all of Nevada state laws. But I don't recognize the United States government as even existing."* So you have to ask why Republicans like Rand Paul, Rick Perry and Ted Cruz who would like to be President would support a person who doesn't believe in the government that they aspire to lead – but again we know the answer, they are opportunistic hypocrites. And the big irony is that although Bundy and his supporters are blasting against President Obama's 'Big Government' and the Bureau of Land Management, they forget to mention that it was their all-time favorite Republican, Ronald Reagan, who signed the executive order extending those federal grazing fees indefinitely. So if this is the government overreact that Sean Hannity and other Bundy supporters truly believe they should blame it on *The Gipper*. But of course we know that they won't, especially because for them facts don't matter.



As a three year-old, the first political song/slogan that I sang was *"I Like Ike"* which always brought a huge smile to my father's face as he was both a proud Republican and huge supporter of General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who served as the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces that defeated Germany and Japan in WWII and then handily defeated his Democratic opponent Adlai Stevenson in 1952 for the Presidency of the United States. Although he used the CIA to depose the democratically elected president of Iran and reinstalled The Shah during his first year in office and used nuclear threats to conclude the Korean War with China, he also enacted a New Look policy of nuclear deterrence that gave priority to inexpensive nuclear weapons while reducing the funding for conventional military forces, with the goal of keeping pressure on the Soviet Union and reducing federal deficits at the meantime. In domestic social policy which mattered more to African Americans, he sent federal troops to Little Rock, Arkansas, for the first time since reconstruction to enforce federal court orders to desegregate public schools.

Today, everybody likes Ike. Liberals see Dwight Eisenhower's foreign policy as a model of strategic restraint. Conservatives view him as a tough but shrewd warrior president. But there's another side to Ike, one that's often ignored: The story of his political life after leaving the White House. Ike in winter became a ferocious hawk on Vietnam who helped propel America deeper into the quagmire.

Eisenhower was the son of pacifist Mennonites who fretted about his love of military history. He became a hero of World War II and the architect of D-Day. And Ike also understood the price of war. After becoming president in 1953, he hammered out a truce in the Korean War. In 1954, Eisenhower resisted entreaties to intervene in Vietnam following the French defeat at Dien Bien Phu. Indeed, during the last seven-and-a-half years of Eisenhower's presidency, only a single American service member was killed by hostile fire (in Lebanon in 1958). Eisenhower famously left the White House in 1961 warning about *"the military-industrial complex."* But for me the crowning moment was when Eisenhower used a strong decent against the British, French and Israelis when they gave Egypt's President Abdel Nasser 24 hours to rescind his nationalization of the Suez Canal and then attacked. And it was Eisenhower's efforts

through the United Nations that defused the conflict, which gave Egypt sovereignty over the Canal with the British, French and Israelis guaranteed rite of passage.

These odes to Eisenhower's foreign-policy judgment always end with his retirement in 1961 to a farm in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. But Eisenhower lived for another eight years. He didn't retreat from public life and paint pictures of world leaders like George W. Bush, but remained a major figure on the national stage. He enjoyed enormous respect and credibility as a war hero, the Republican Party's elder statesman, and after 1964, one of only two ex-presidents still alive (*the other being Harry Truman*). Lyndon Johnson relied heavily on the counsel of a man who knew the burdens of office.

With the United States on the brink of a major intervention in Vietnam, the nation needed Ike's sense of caution and restraint, and his recognition that the use of force can trap a country in foreign adventures. Unfortunately, Eisenhower's good judgment vanished during the 1960s, as he urged officials into ever-greater escalation in Vietnam.

As Andrew Johns detailed in his book on the Republican Party and the war, Vietnam's Second Front, Eisenhower sought victory in Vietnam by almost any means. In February 1965, Eisenhower spent two hours explaining to LBJ's inner circle the vital importance of *"denying Southeast Asia to the Communists,"* and the need to massively expand the bombing of North Vietnam. But air power didn't work, and by the summer of 1965, South Vietnam was crumbling in the face of a Communist insurgency. LBJ faced a critical decision about whether to send large numbers of American troops, and Ike urged the president to Americanize the war. *"When you once appeal to force in an international situation involving military help for a nation, you have to go all out!"* Eisenhower told Johnson. *"We are not going to be run out of a free country that we helped establish."* *"When you once appeal to force in an situation involving military help for a nation, you have to go all out!"*

As the fighting descended into stalemate, Eisenhower resisted a negotiated peace: *"I have no patience whatsoever with the people that want to pull out of Vietnam at once, or are otherwise prepared to surrender principle."* In 1966, he spoke to LBJ by phone, telling him that winning in Vietnam was more important than fighting poverty or reaching the moon. The following year, Eisenhower urged Congress to declare war on North Vietnam, so that Americans would stay focused on the mission rather than getting distracted by the Great Society. Meanwhile, he exhorted LBJ to expand the war. *"This respecting of boundary lines on the map, I think you can overdo it,"* he said. The U.S. should pursue the Communists into Laos, Cambodia, and even North Vietnam, and ignore the *"kooks' and 'hippies' and all the rest that are talking about surrendering."*

The plan was so hawkish it made Richard Nixon nervous. Nixon felt that Ike may be right from a *"military standpoint,"* but the diplomatic and political consequences would be dangerous, running *"a substantial risk of widening the ground conflict in Vietnam."* In the lead-up to the 1968 elections, Ike threatened to hammer candidates who took a dovish stance: *"If any Republican or Democrat suggests that we pull out of Vietnam and turn our backs on the more than thirteen thousand Americans who died in the cause of freedom there, they will have me to contend with. That's one of the few things that would start me off on a series of stump speeches across the nation."*

If Ike in winter had retreated from public life, and railed against the peaceniks from his farm in Gettysburg, it might have mattered less. But during his retirement Eisenhower was a highly influential player who reinforced LBJ's hawkish views and made it more difficult to find an exit strategy from a tragic conflict. General Douglas MacArthur once said that old soldiers never die, they just fade away. The nation might have been better off if Ike, as a counselor on Vietnam, had faded away and Eisenhower's glowing foreign-policy reputation today ignores his tragic post-White House cheerleading for escalation in Vietnam.



Inline image 6

As Forest Gump's mother use to say, *"stupid is what stupid does"* and there is nothing more stupid that the sweeping **House Bill 60**, also known as **The Safe Carry Protection Act**, will allow licensed gun owners to carry their firearms into public places, including bars, nightclubs, schools, churches and government buildings that Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal (R) signed on Wednesday. And although the controversial proposals that didn't survive were the *"campus carry"* provision, which would have legalized the carrying of guns on campus, and changes that would have required houses of worship to allow guns unless leaders ban them. (Instead, religious leaders can *"opt-in"* to allow guns into their congregations). The bill, which takes effect July 1, also legalizes the use of silencers for hunting, clears the way for school staffers to carry guns in school zones and lets leaders of religious congregations choose whether to

allow licensed gun holders inside. And it allows permitted gun owners to carry their weapons in government buildings – including parts of courthouses – where there is no security at the entrance.

Web Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/04/23/georgia-gun-bill_n_5199630.html

Last September the **American Journal of Medicine** published a study on guns, violence and mental health, found that gun ownership is a bigger factor than mental illness when it comes to firearms deaths. But the data suggest that both play roles. Earlier research has found that places with high rates of gun ownership have more firearms deaths, but critics of those findings say that it could be that people living in dangerous places are apt to buy firearms to protect themselves. And the question of mental illness has surfaced again and again, with shootings in Aurora, Colo., Newtown, Conn., Oak Creek, Wisconsin, Virginia Tech and the Washington Navy Yard, where 12 people were killed last year by a man who appears to have had escalating mental health issues and although not included in the study, again with the shooting earlier this month at Fort Hood. In this study, doctors in New York looked at data on gun ownership, crime rate, firearms-related deaths and depression from 27 developed countries, including the United States, Japan, Great Britain and South Africa.

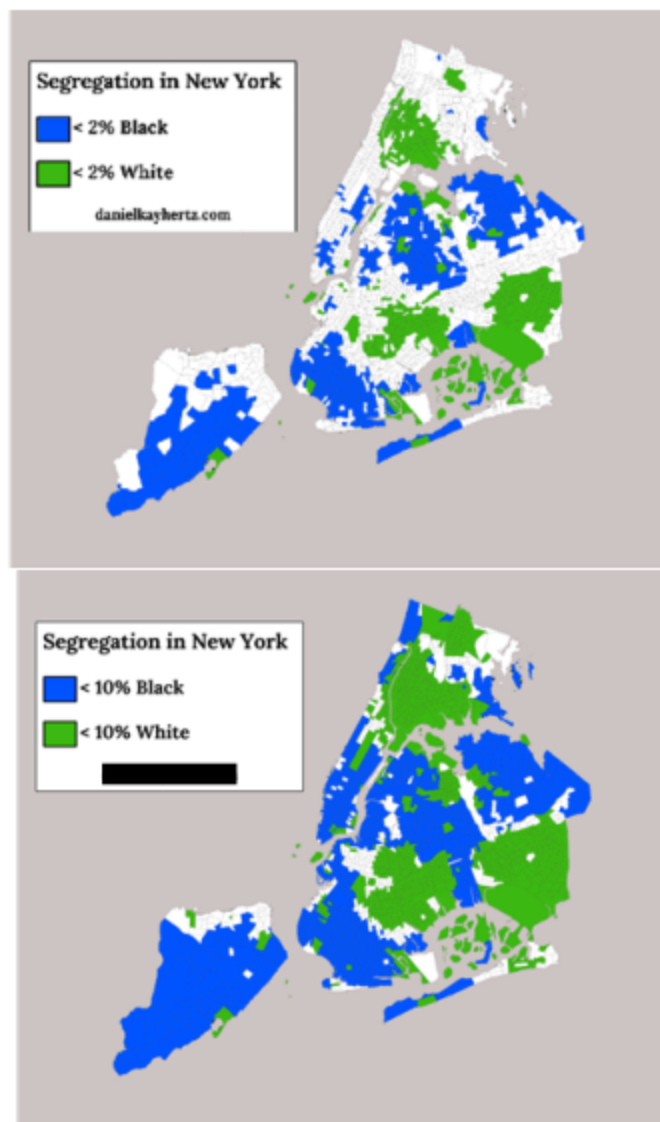
The United States had the highest rate of civilian gun ownership, at almost 90 guns per 100 people. The next two countries on the list were Switzerland and Finland, with about 45 guns per 100 people. Japan, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom had the lowest gun numbers, ranging from less than one gun per 100 in Japan to six in the U.K. The countries with more civilian guns also had the highest rates of firearms deaths, with the United States leading the list at 10 deaths per 100,000, based on an international mortality database. Gun ownership was strongly associated with firearms deaths. The only outlier was South Africa, which had 13 guns per 100 people, but a firearms death rate almost as high as in the U.S. They found the correlation between gun ownership and gun deaths was massive. While gun ownership is rare in Japan and the United Kingdom, it's high in both the US and South Africa. In Japan it's 0.06 per 100,000 people. In South Africa, it's 9.4 per 100,000 people. In the UK, the rate is 0.25 per 100,000, while in the US it is 10.2.

It is universally acknowledged by experts around the world that mental illness also correlated with firearms deaths, but the connection was much weaker than for gun ownership. The association pretty much disappeared depending on how the researchers crunched the numbers. There was no overall association between gun ownership or mental illness and the overall crime rate in the 27 countries. The researchers say this questions the premise that people arm themselves to protect themselves from crime. This study, like earlier ones, finds a correlation but no direct cause, as a result the study didn't show that gun ownership or mental illness are causing the deaths. But what we do know is that in homes that have guns the people living in those homes are five times more likely to be a victim of firearm violence. And I have been in more bars and night clubs then I would like to acknowledge where fights broke out..... So I can only imagine how many people would have died if the combatants had been strapped. As John Avlon, editor in chief of **The Daily Beast** commented, *"if they had allowed guns in the bars that frequented in my teens and twenties I would either be in jail or dead."* And for political leaders in Georgia to not understand this..... They are **stupid with a "T"** and this is my rant of the week.....

WEEK's READINGS

These Maps Show Just How Segregated New York City Really Is

I know that many Americans will tell you that we live in a post-racial society but this is not true. My home city, New York City, may be one of the most diverse cities in the world, but it's also one of the most segregated cities in the United States. Take a look at these maps from Daniel Kay Hertz, a masters student at the **Harris School of Public Policy at the University of Chicago**. Hertz used data from the 2012 Census American Community Survey to show how segregated New York City really is. The GIF below shows first, a map of New York City neighborhoods that are less than 2 percent black and less than 2 percent white, then neighborhoods with less than 10 percent. The takeaway: a wide swath of the city is segregated, if not hyper-segregated.



New York's segregation, however, doesn't necessarily look like segregation in other American cities. As Hertz writes, there *"aren't very many monolithically black neighborhoods left in New York."* Here's a map of neighborhoods in New York that are over 90 percent black. This, Hertz writes, is because *"black neighborhoods have become significantly mixed, in particular with people of Hispanic descent."* Hertz also added that his maps focus on *"white-black segregation because that, for various social and historical reasons, has been by far the most significant geographic separation in American cities, certainly in the Midwest and Northeast."*

Hertz decided to put together the above maps after so many people were shocked by last month's **Civil Rights Project** report on school segregation. The report found that New York City has the most segregated schools in the country. Of the city's 32 Community School Districts, nearly 20 had 10 percent or fewer white students in 2010. The report also calls most of the city's charter schools *"apartheid institutions,"* as white students make up less than one percent of students at 73 percent of city charter schools.

Racial segregation remains an enormous problem in America, and it's lasting longer than anyone expected. The average black person lives in a neighborhood that is 45 percent black. Without segregation, his neighborhood would be only 13 percent black, according to professors John Logan and Brian Stults at Brown and Florida State. Studying the **2010 Census** data, Logan and Stult evaluated segregation in major cities with a **dissimilarity index**, which identifies the percentage of one group that would have to move to a different neighborhood to eliminate segregation. A score above 60 on the dissimilarity index is considered extreme.

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Most of Manhattan is white south of 125th Street, with the exception of Chinatown. South Brooklyn is mostly white, with pockets of Asians and Hispanics, and Northeast Brooklyn going into Queens is heavily black. Queens and the Bronx are highly diverse. The New York City area's black-white dissimilarity score is **79.1**, according to a study of **2010 Census** data by professors John Logan and Brian Stults of Brown and Florida State University. A score above **60** on the **dissimilarity index** is considered very high segregation.

- Newark, NJ's black-white dissimilarity score is **78.0**, according to a study.
- Chicago, IL's black-white dissimilarity score is **75.9**, according to a study.
- Philadelphia, PA's black-white dissimilarity score is **73.7**, according to a study.
- Miami, FL's black-white dissimilarity score is **73.0**, according to a study.
- Cleveland, OH's black-white dissimilarity score is **72.6**, according to a study.

The most segregated major city in America is Detroit, MI. Detroit's inner city is almost exclusively black, except for a small Hispanic corner in the southwest called "*Mexicantown*." The suburbs like Grosse Pointe, Dearborn, and Ferndale are heavily white. Detroit's black-white **dissimilarity score** is **79.6**, according to a study of 2010 Census data by professors John Logan and Brian Stults of Brown and Florida State University. Again, a score above 60 on the dissimilarity index is considered very high segregation.

The articles that I examined primarily focused on white-black segregation because that, for various social and historical reasons, has been by far the most significant geographic separation in American cities, certainly in the Midwest and Northeast. But by far the second most significant separation – white-Latino segregation – is also very extreme in New York. The same Census analysis that found NYC was the second-most-segregated metro area in terms of white and black people found that it was the third-most-segregated metro area in terms of white and Latino people.

The Promise of Freedom: For formerly enslaved people, freedom meant an end to the whip, to the sale of family members, and to white masters. The promise of freedom after the Civil War and through Reconstruction held out the hope of self-determination, educational opportunities, and full rights of citizenship. After the Civil War, millions of formerly enslaved African Americans hoped to join the larger society as full and equal citizens. Although some white Americans welcomed them, others used people's ignorance, racism, and self-interest to sustain and spread racial divisions. By 1900, new laws and old customs in the North and the South had created a segregated society that condemned Americans of color to second-class citizenship.

African Americans turned to the courts to help protect their constitutional rights. But the courts challenged earlier civil rights legislation and handed down a series of decisions that permitted states to segregate people of color. In the pivotal case of **Plessy v. Ferguson** in 1896, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that racially separate facilities, if equal, did not violate the Constitution. Segregation, the Court said, was not discrimination. In 1952 civil rights lawyers of the **NAACP Legal Defense Fund**, headed by future Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall argued that the Plessy v. Ferguson decision misinterpreted the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment—the authors of this amendment had not intended to allow segregated schools. Nor did existing law consider the harmful social and psychological effects of segregation. Integrated schools, they asserted, were a fundamental right for all Americans.

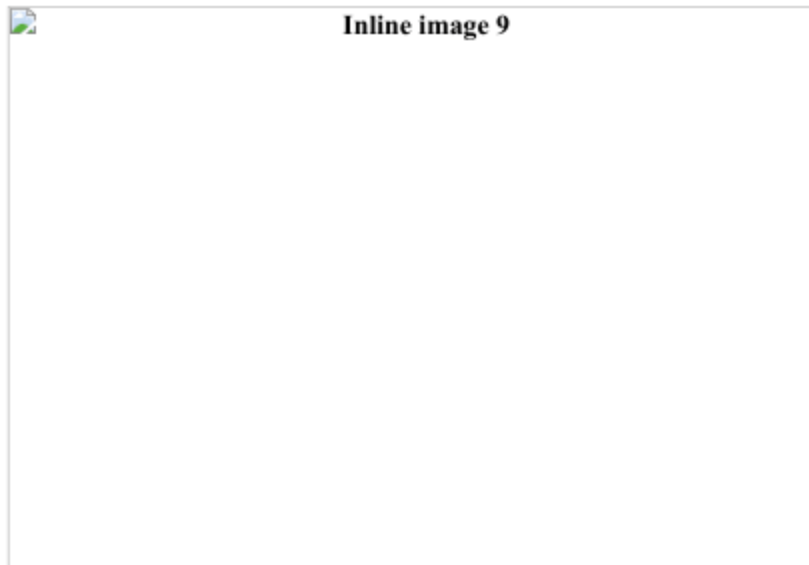
The Problem We All Live With

Earl Warren wrote the decision for the Court that struck down '**Separate But Equal**.' He agreed with the civil rights attorneys that it was not clear whether the framers of the Fourteenth Amendment intended to permit segregated public education. The doctrine of separate but equal did not appear until 1896, he noted, and it pertained to transportation, not education. More importantly, he said, the present was at issue, not the past. Education was perhaps the most vital function of state and local governments, and racial segregation of any kind deprived African Americans of equal protection under the Fourteenth Amendment and due process under the Fifth Amendment. In the Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision Earl Warren wrote:

"Segregation of white and colored children in public schools has a detrimental effect upon the colored children. The impact is greater when it has the sanction of the law, for the policy of separating the races is usually interpreted as denoting the inferiority of the Negro group... Any language in contrary to this finding is rejected. We conclude that in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. "

—Earl Warren, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

The problem with segregated neighborhoods is that they lead to increase xenophobia, more ignorance, less tolerance, as segregated non-white neighborhoods tend to have much higher violent crime rates, and much more modest to little or no business districts and significantly less job opportunities and investment infrastructure. The problem with segregated neighborhoods is that there are often targets of contempt and hatred. And in spite of public perception Racism is pervasive in American society and remains a silent code that systematically closes the doors of opportunity to young and old alike. Visibly identifiable members of racial and ethnic oppressed groups continue to struggle for equal access and opportunity, particularly during times of stringent economics, strident calls for tax revolt, dwindling natural resources, inflation, widespread unemployment and underemployment, and conservative judicial opinions that are precursors to greater deprivation. Unless curbed, these conditions invariably lead to greater ethnic and racial rivalry and to greater political, social, and economic oppression.



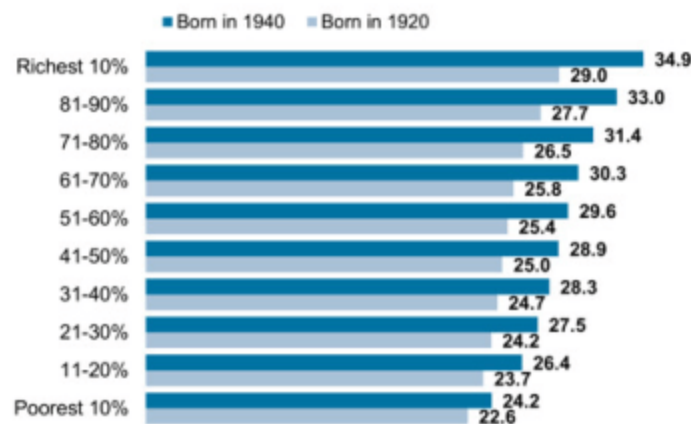
In the **Atlantic Magazine** last week I ran across an interesting article by Derek Thompson – ***Get Rich, Live Longer: The Ultimate Consequence of Income Inequality*** – about how the income gap affects the longevity. Brookings economist Barry Bosworth crunched the data on income and lifespans for the **Wall Street Journal**, and the numbers tell three clear stories.

1. Rich people live longer.
2. Richer people's lifespans are growing at a faster rate.
3. The problem is worse for women than for men.

First, let's look at the guys. A rich man (top decile) born in 1940 can expect to live 10 years longer after he turns 55 than a poor man (bottom decile). That longevity gap grew by four years in one generation.

How Much Longer Will a 55-Year-Old Man Live?

Average additional life expectancy (in years) at age 55, by mid-career income

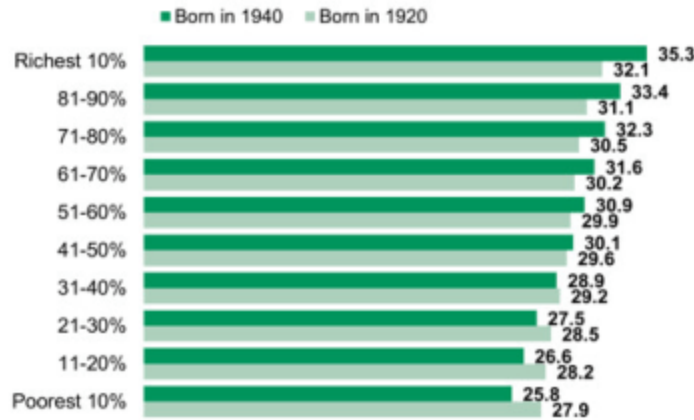


Source: Barry Bosworth, Brookings Institution | [REDACTED]

Women live longer than men, overall. But their inequality gap getting worse. A rich woman at 55 can expect to live a decade longer than a poor woman, too. But this gap grew even more between the Silent and early Boomer generations, by six years.

How Much Longer Will a 55-Year-Old Woman Live?

Average additional life expectancy (in years) at age 55, by mid-career income

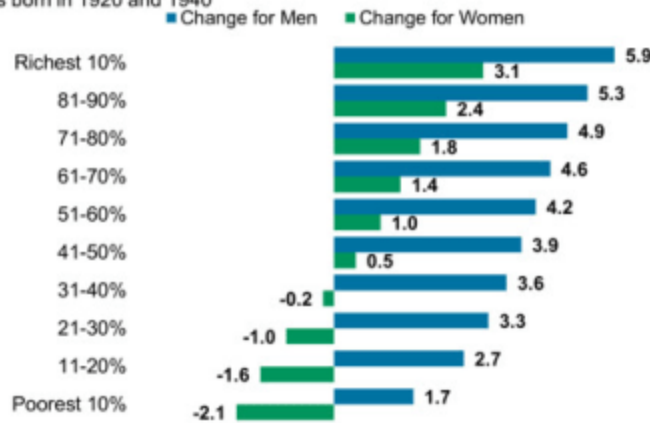


Source: Barry Bosworth, Brookings Institution | [REDACTED]

Here's the money chart and it tells a really sad story. In the richest country in the world, the expected lifespan of middle- and lower-income women is actually declining. At every income level, more money means more life.

Change in Life Expectancy

Change in average additional life expectancy (in years) at age 55, by income, between cohorts born in 1920 and 1940

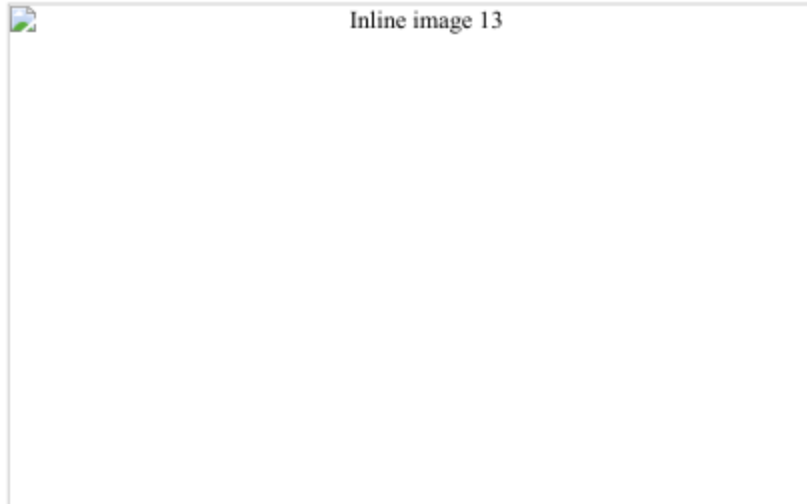


Source: Barry Bosworth, Brookings Institution | [REDACTED]

A few thoughts and implications:

- 1. Causality:** This is your obligatory correlation-is-not-causation caveat. It's intuitive that being rich gives you access to better food, more social connectivity, and higher-quality health care. But this data does not prove that making another \$10,000 literally buys you additional months of life. Confounding variables abound. For example, poor people are more likely to be smokers, for a variety of cultural and tax reasons, and smoking kills you faster, no matter what AGI you fill in on your tax forms.
- 2. Geography:** Annie Lowrey reported that the sorting of zip codes into rich and poor means you can have two counties divided by 300 miles and more than 20 years of expected life. The typical guy in McDowell County, West Virginia, makes less than \$30,000 a year and doesn't live to 65. Five hours north on the highway, a typical man living in Fairfax County, Virginia, makes more than \$100,000 and lives more than 80 years. The two Virginian counties are two different countries.
- 3. Policy:** When somebody in Washington proposes raising the retirement age for Social Security or Medicare, he typically says something like: "We can afford it, because we are living longer." Yes, We can afford it, when the We in that sentence applies to an audience of white rich old men and women who really are seeing their lifespans grow by leaps and bounds. But We doesn't apply to the millions of poor women whose lifespans are actually declining. Raising the Social Security retirement age disproportionately reduces lifetime benefits for the very people Social Security was invented to protect. Jordan Weissmann and others have made this point before.

4. Morality: We know a few things about money and life. We know that market wages (pre-tax, pre-transfer) are flat-lining or falling for middle- and lower-income Americans thanks to globalization, technology, marriage- and geographical sorting, the decline of unions, and other reasons. We know that poorer Americans live shorter lives and that poorer women live shortening lives. We don't know the precise causal mechanism, but we know that the relationship is remarkably tight at every income level. We also know that the intellectual leader of one of the two major parties has repeatedly produced a budget that would cut taxes and transfers in such a way that middle- and lower-income people would necessarily suffer a loss of government-transfer income that we have little expectation to be made up in the growth of market wages. (Two-thirds of Paul Ryan's budget cuts are for income-transfer programs.) I'll leave it for you to decide, based on what we know about income and lifespans, whether a program that would necessarily make the low-income lower-income is one that deserves to be taken seriously as a moral document.



Last week Norm Ornstein (*political scientist and resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, a Washington D.C. think tank*) wrote a scathing in **The Atlantic – McCutcheon and the New Banana Republic** – suggesting that the Supreme Court's ruling on campaign finance means that all but the most blatant corruption is likely to escape the law's scrutiny. The article was inspired by conclusions from the third annual World Forum on Governance, which brings together people from countries around the world, including Eastern and Central Europe, Russia, China, Ukraine, Turkey, Egypt, South Africa, India, and Bolivia in search of best governing practices. One highlight of the forum – was a talk given by Pietro Grasso, president of the Italian Senate. Grasso is best known as the longtime chief of the anti-Mafia squad who survived death threats and actual assassination attempts to bring down a series of Mafia leaders and hollow out the organization. He gave a stirring talk on the international nature of corruption, but his advice to those assembled also emphasized the importance of cleaning up campaign finance.

His major warning was – corruption is a cancer that afflicts societies struggling to adopt democratic values and forms of governance, and those that make no or few pretenses about democratic values. It also hits all established and venerated democracies. It can come in big forms – leaders such as Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan or Russia's Vladimir Putin and their cronies, and oligarchs piling up fortunes; and it can come in smaller forms – professors in Kenya demanding sexual favors or money in return for grades, or local officials in India demanding bribes for services. It can be illegal or legal, including, as Grasso pointed out, corrupt organizations and individuals laundering their ill-gotten gains through legitimate organizations they purchase.

Grasso says that laws are necessary to combat corruption, but the laws need to be enforced by honest prosecutors and judges, and they need to be bolstered by a culture that supports and abets honest governance. Both the Czech Republic and Slovakia moved to create independent judiciaries by having 12-year terms for judges, insulating them from political pressure. But the Czech Republic, thanks to Vaclav Havel, picked judges of sterling character, while Slovakia, with no Havel, picked some shady ones who now operate in a corrupt fashion, and has no ability to remove or constrain them.

As such Ornstein asked – **Is the U.S. on the Verge of Becoming a Banana Republic?**

Because for decades Americans came to gathering like the World Forum on Governance, and their role, in part, has been to offer advice to reformers inside and outside governments from around the world that we would normally view as "*less developed*" in their democratic culture and institutions. But not this year. Lots of non-Americans knew about the U.S. Supreme Court's Citizens United and McCutcheon decisions and wondered how the United States could be slipping back so much. That is a long introduction to get to McCutcheon. Many analysts have written a lot about the decision, with a natural focus on its direct implications for campaigns. Those are huge and important. But they are overshadowed by the impact of the decision on corruption in America.

Some have suggested that McCutcheon was not a terribly consequential decision – that it did not really end individual-contribution limits, that it was a minor adjustment post-Citizens United. Others have said that it may have a silver lining: more money to parties,

more of the money disclosed. I disagree on both counts. Justice Stephen Breyer's penetrating dissent to the decision pointed out the many methods that campaigns, parties, and their lawyers would use to launder huge contributions in ways that would make a mockery of individual limits. Chief Justice John Roberts pooh-poohed them as fanciful. And, of course, they started to emerge the day after the decision. As for disclosure, the huge amounts that will now flow in through political parties will be channeled through joint committees, state and local party committees, and others in complex ways that will make real disclosure immensely difficult, if not impossible.

More significant, in any case, were Roberts's sweeping conclusions about corruption and the appearance of corruption in the decision. The chief justice took the shaky conclusion reached by Justice Anthony Kennedy in the Citizens United decision — that money given "independently" of campaigns could not involve corruption or its appearance — and applied it in an even more comprehensive fashion to money given directly to candidates and campaigns. Thanks to McCutcheon, only quid pro quo corruption is sufficient to trigger any restrictions on campaign contributions — meaning, direct bribery of the Abscam or American Hustle variety, presumably captured on videotape for the world to see. The appearance of corruption? Forget about it. Restrictions on elected officials soliciting big money? Forget about them, too.

To anyone who has actually been around the lawmaking process or the political process more generally, this is mind-boggling. It makes legal what has for generations been illegal or at least immoral. It returns lawmaking to the kind of favor-trading bazaar that was common in the Gilded Age. With intense competition between parties over election outcomes, with the stakes incredibly high over who will capture majorities in a polarized era, and with money everywhere and intense competition for dollars, the trade of favors for money — and the threat of damage for the failure to produce money — will be everywhere. Access to lawmakers, presidents, their aides, and subordinates is precious, including when they are actually marking up legislation. In the aftermath of Roberts's decisions, this precious access will be sold to the highest bidders. It makes legal what has for generations been illegal or at least immoral. It returns lawmaking to the kind of favor-trading bazaar that was common in the Gilded Age.

In the pre-reform era where there were "*Speaker's Clubs*" and "*President's Clubs*" with menus for soft-money donors: for \$10,000, lunch with key committee chairs and a day hobnobbing with important lawmakers and committee staffers; for \$25,000, all that and a small breakfast or lunch with the speaker; and so on. Those will be back, with the dollar amounts higher and the access more intimate. Big donors will make clear to party leaders that multimillion-dollar donations are one step away — and will be forthcoming if only the leaders will understand the legislative needs of the donor. McCutcheon not only made all that legal but also gave it the Supreme Court's seal of approval.

It is obvious to everyone that Roberts has, over the past few years, taken a meat axe to 50 years and more of law and precedent on campaign finance, just as he took a meat axe to voting rights. In both areas, he showered contempt on Congress and its laws. All after he assured senators during his confirmation hearings that he would bend over backward to rule narrowly, find consensus, and respect precedent. It is hard to escape the conclusion that he deliberately misled the Senate to win confirmation. Many of those who celebrate these decisions say they simply reflect the Constitution. Wrong.

They reflect five ideologically driven justices and their world views. Ornstein points out that — If not for the decision of Sandra Day O'Connor to retire from the Court to care for her husband and his Alzheimer's disease, we would have experienced the opposite decisions in Citizens United, Shelby County, and McCutcheon. Voting rights would be protected and not suppressed, corruption would be restrained and not celebrated, oligarchs would be limited and not reigning supreme. Ornstein ended his article — Ben Franklin famously answered a question about our emergent form of government following the Constitutional Convention by saying, "*A Republic, if you can keep it.*" Thanks to Chief Justice Roberts, we have kept a republic—but it is moving rapidly toward the banana variety.

But the truth is that we now have quid pro quo campaign finance. As multi-billionaire Sheldon Adelson (*who spent more than \$100 million in the 2012 election*) has made a mockery out of campaign finance when he opening had a gathering of prospective Republican presidential candidates "to kiss his ring" in Las Vegas which has now been dubbed "the Sheldon Primary," an event emblematic of how warped the system for financing presidential elections has become. And as Adelson's number one concern is supporting Israel, I am sure that he made it absolutely clear to any of the candidates that unless they were willing to support Israel 100% they would not receive a penny of his money and worse he might use his enormous wealth and resources against them..... If this isn't blatant quid pro quo, then nothing is..... And the rest of the world knows it.... From voter suppression, the recent Supreme Court's decisions on election funding and the unlimited and unchecked dark money in American politics..... We are now on a slippery slope towards becoming the *Banana Republic* that Ornstein warns against — a Republic in name only, controlled (*remotely*) by a few rich people at the top.

European Union nations see an uptick in economic security at just the right time

VLADIMIR PUTIN'S seizure of Crimea and destabilization of Ukraine have added geopolitics to a list of Europe's woes that had previously been headed by economics. In fact, if not for Mr. Putin's land grab, the big story out of Europe might be its surprising economic comeback.

That's a relative judgment, to be sure; Europe has come back only in comparison to the disaster it faced two years ago, or to the even larger collapse that many forecast. Still, after many long months of negative growth and high unemployment, heavily indebted governments such as those of Spain and Italy can now access credit markets at rates not much higher than Germany, Europe's economic powerhouse. Even Greece sold five-year bonds at manageable interest rates on Thursday; the European Commission predicts the Greek economy to grow in 2014 for the first time in half a decade, albeit only by 0.6 percent.

These results are a tribute not only to these countries' willingness to impose wrenching austerity. They also bespeak an implicit bailout from the European Central Bank, whose president, Mario Draghi, persuaded would-be investors in official debt that the ECB would do "whatever it takes" to shore up the currency, the euro, in which that debt is denominated. But the progress hardly means that the region's problems are well and truly behind it. That could only be said once it resumes sustainable economic growth, which, in turn, hinges on the resumption of growth in the second and third largest economies after Germany: France and Italy.

France and Italy are plagued not only by insufficient demand, which austerity worsens, but also by overregulation and job-destroying tax systems. Entrenched interest groups have fended off structural reform for years. Fortunately new prime ministers, Matteo Renzi in Italy and Manuel Valls of France (the latter an appointee of President François Hollande), are proposing fiscal policies that actually address the high cost of doing private-sector business in their respective countries. Since these policies include tax cuts, however, they also might increase French and Italian borrowing in the short term, above the levels permitted by the European Union.

The powers that be within the European Union — German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Mr. Draghi — would be wise to grant Mr. Valls and Mr. Renzi the fiscal wiggle room they need. It's one thing to borrow for current consumption, which is what France and Italy have done, in spades, until now. It's quite another to borrow for purposes of enhancing an economy's growth capacity. To the extent that France and Italy are at last genuinely and verifiably doing the latter — a big if, admittedly — they should get the support of their European partners. At a time when Mr. Putin is moving tanks on Ukraine's borders and brandishing Europe's gas supplies as a political weapon, Europe can ill afford any additional crises, economic or political. Indeed, if they needed any additional reasons to value unity and pragmatism in their mutual economic dealings, the Russian leader has supplied them.

Washington Post Editorial Board: April 12, 2014

Racial Equality Loses at the Court

A blinkered view of race in America won out in the Supreme Court on Tuesday when six justices agreed, for various reasons, to allow Michigan voters to ban race-conscious admissions policies in higher education. In 2003, the court upheld such a policy at the University of Michigan Law School because it furthered a compelling governmental interest in educational diversity. Opponents of affirmative action moved to amend the State Constitution to ban any consideration of race or sex in public education and employment. In 2006, voters passed the amendment by a wide margin. Affirmative action supporters sued to strike down the amendment, arguing that by changing the rules of the game in a way that uniquely burdened racial minorities, the amendment violated the equal protection clause. A closely divided federal appeals court agreed.

In **Schuetz v. Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action**, the Supreme Court reversed that ruling and allowed the amendment to stand. Among other things, the justices disagreed about whose rights were at issue: the minorities who would be affected by the ban or the majority of the state's voters who passed it. Justice Anthony Kennedy, writing for a three-member plurality, sided with the voters, who he said had undertaken "a basic exercise of their democratic power" in approving the amendment. He cautioned that the ruling took no position on the constitutionality of race-conscious admissions policies themselves. "This case is not about how the debate about racial preferences should be resolved. It is about who may resolve it."

Not so, Justice Sonia Sotomayor responded, in a stinging 58-page dissent. "Our Constitution places limits on what a majority of the people may do," she wrote, such as when they pass laws that oppress minorities. That's what the affirmative action ban does, by altering the political process to single out race and sex as the only factors that may not be considered in university admissions. While the Constitution "does not guarantee minority groups victory in the political process," Justice Sotomayor wrote, "it does guarantee them meaningful and equal access to that process. It guarantees that the majority may not win by stacking the political process against minority groups permanently."

The Michigan amendment has already resulted in a 25 percent drop in minority representation in Michigan's public universities and colleges, even as the proportion of college-age African-Americans in the state has gone up. In the most eloquent of her defense, Justice Sotomayor rightly took aim at the conservative members of the court who speak high mindedness of racial equality even as they write off decades-old precedent meant to address the lingering effects of "centuries of racial discrimination" — a view that is "out of touch with reality." The reality, she wrote, is that "race matters."

In response to her pointed rebuke, Chief Justice John Roberts Jr. wrote a terse concurrence chiding Justice Sotomayor for questioning her colleagues' "openness and candor." Yet the chief justice's own words on race show no true understanding of what she called America's "long and lamentable record" of rigging the political game against racial minorities. "The way to stop discrimination on the basis of race is to stop discriminating on the basis of race," he wrote glibly in a 2007 case striking down school integration efforts in Washington and Kentucky. "Things have changed dramatically" 50 years after the Voting Rights Act, he wrote last year in *Shelby County v. Holder*, which struck down a provision of that act. These quotes represent a naïve vision of racial justice. As Justice Sotomayor put it, "we ought not sit back and wish away, rather than confront, the racial inequality that exists in our society."

The NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL BOARD – April 22, 2014



Inline image 1

Some Countries Realize You Have A Life Outside Work. The U.S. Isn't One Of Them

Working in the U.S. ain't what it used to be

While other countries are coming up with new ways to promote work-life balance, such as France's latest move to limit after-hours email, the U.S. seems to be falling behind. It's been some time since the nation once responsible for creating weekends and the 40-hour work week made any sweeping changes to improve the working lives of its greatest living resource: people.

And it's not just because Americans are workaholics. Instead, it might have to do with what has been called the productivity squeeze or speedup. High unemployment in the wake of the Great Recession has enabled companies to squeeze more out of fewer workers, all while paying them roughly the same amount. It's great for corporate profits -- which hit a record high last year -- but not so much for workers.

But the consequences may be beginning to show. A 2012 poll found that less than half of American workers are totally satisfied with their jobs. Meanwhile, protests over wages and working conditions for low-wage employees have spread throughout the U.S. since 2012.

Here are eight ways U.S. workers have it rough compared to other countries:

1. We have full-time jobs that don't pay a living wage.

In Australia, the minimum wage is around \$15.30 (in U.S. dollars). Despite this, both the country's poverty and unemployment rates are lower than in the U.S.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., a proposal to raise the federal minimum wage from its current \$7.25 an hour to a proposed \$10.10 still faces opposition from multiple high-profile members of Congress, as well as corporations. Such a hike would pull around 5 million people

out of poverty, according to a recent study. Even so, Walmart has said that it isn't even "considering" raising the minimum wage for its workers.

2. We force fired or unemployed workers to race against the clock.

In Denmark, workers who lose their job are guaranteed up to 90 percent of their original salary for two years, provided they participate in programs to demonstrate "labor market availability."

Meanwhile, in the U.S., an estimated 2.3 million people have now lost unemployment benefits after an extension for the long-term unemployed was allowed to expire in December. While the Senate has voted to renew the extension, efforts to enact the law have been stymied by political bargaining from House Republicans. Long-term unemployment has been linked to increased risk of chronic health conditions and even death.

3. We may never get the chance to retire.

In India, formal employers with more than 20 workers are required to give employees with at least five years at the company a retirement gratuity equal to 15 days of wages for each year worked.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., many workers have little or no money saved for retirement. While such a gratuity may be less preferable than employer matched saving plans like 401(k)s, only about half of U.S. workers were employed by companies that sponsored them in 2011, according to the Employee Benefit Research Institute. Instead, 37 percent of workers say they plan on working until they get too sick or die, a 2012 survey found.

4. We barely take any time off, in part because we aren't given any.

In Portugal and Austria, workers are guaranteed 35 days off a year by law, including holidays and voluntary vacation time.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is the only advanced economy that does not guarantee its workers paid vacation time by law. While every country in the European Union guarantees at least four weeks off per year, a full-time American worker with 25 years' experience gets just 15.7 paid vacation days each year on average, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. What's more, Americans left an average of 9.2 unused vacation days on the table in 2012, Harris Interactive found.

Taking such a small amount of vacation time is so engrained in the American work ethic that a recent Cadillac ad even celebrated it:

5. Work is such an important part of life that Americans are expected to choose it over their children.

In Sweden, parents are allowed to take up to 480 days of at least partially paid leave to spend with their kids until they turn eight.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., even taking a mere three days of paternity leave might get you publicly shamed. That's what happened recently to professional baseball player Daniel Murphy. After taking the MLB's three guaranteed days of paternity leave, announcers Boomer Esiason and Mike Francesa suggested that Murphy should have chosen work over being there for the birth of his child. Paternity leave helps the economy by enabling women to stay involved in the workforce. Meanwhile, maternity leave has been linked to healthier children and lower rates of depression in mothers.

Mets second baseman Daniel Murphy was criticized by some for missing two games in order to be with his wife after she gave birth.

6. We don't take enough time to unplug.

In France, a "right of disconnecting" agreement was recently made, limiting tech workers' hours so they don't have to check email off the clock.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., 83 percent of smartphone users said they check work email after work hours, according to a 2011 study. Doing so can have a number of negative effects, including added stress.

7. And we don't even really break for lunch.

In Spain, lunch breaks can last up to 3 hours, for some, including a mid-day siesta.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., over a quarter of Americans say they rarely take lunch breaks, according to a 2012 study by Right Management. Of those who do, 39 percent said they eat at their desks. While even Spain may be cutting back on full-on siestas, experts agree that a designated lunch break can help boost worker productivity and reduce stress.

8. And we're only making the archetypal "starving artist" even hungrier.

In Germany, funding for artists comes out to roughly \$20 per person, while those with art degrees can continue to receive government support so long as they continue to seek out grants.

Meanwhile, in the U.S., funding for the arts comes out to just 41 cents per person. Still, the National Endowment for the Arts, which provides government grants to artists, faces repeated attacks, including from former GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney. Last year, money distributed to art projects via NEA grants declined by 5 percent.

THIS WEEK's QUOTES

"A fashionable idea in technical circles is that quantity not only turns into quality at some extreme of scale, but also does so according to principles we already understand."

Jaron Lanier

BEST VIDEO OF THE WEEK

Bill Maher this week on Real Time discussing Cliven Bundy and racism



On **"Real Time With Bill Maher"** Friday night, Maher and most of his panelists called out Republicans for their support of Cliven Bundy, the racist rancher currently engaged in a standoff with the federal government.

Web Site: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evOrVzVIGpg>

"Was it that hard to predict for the last two or three weeks, when the right wing was lionizing this guy, that he was going to be a huge racist?" Maher said. He went on to say that Republicans have a tradition of boldly trumpeting their lack of prejudice, then immediately revealing their prejudice. "Look, George Wallace used to say 'I'm not a racist, I just believe in states' rights and the Constitution,'" said John Avlon, editor in chief of The Daily Beast. "I mean, this is an old, old riff." Christine Quinn, erstwhile New York City mayoral candidate, said it was odd that Republicans were embracing someone who was so clearly flouting the law, while controversial conservative author Charles Murray said that Bundy's racism would give liberals a free pass to criticize anyone who disdained government overreach. "No one is saying all Republicans are racist," Maher said later. But, he maintained, Republican candidates should distance themselves from supporters with such views.

THIS WEEK's MUSIC



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One of my favorite musicians is the legendary **Lucio Dalla** who was an Italian songwriter and singer whose music became the soundtrack for the lives of generations of Italians. Dalla was born in Bologna, and it remained his home base. His birthday — March 4, 1943 — became the title of one of his first hits, in 1971, after the original name, *"Baby Jesus,"* was censored. Dalla belonged to a genre of Italian songwriters known as *"cantautori,"* whose lyrics gave voice to the aspirations and frustrations of a postwar generation seeking societal change. Dalla's first musical passion was opera, which was sparked when he played a role in Puccini's *"Gianni Schicchi"* when he was 7, according to an article he wrote in 2009 for the Milan daily **Corriere Della Sera**. He was then enraptured by jazz, and learned to play the clarinet. He also played saxophone and piano. At 16 he performed with Chet Baker, the American jazz trumpeter, whom he credited as one of his main influences. He hit his stride in 1971 with a series of albums that sold well and drew critical acclaim.

In 1986 Dalla released his most famous composition *"Caruso"* (my personal favorite), a song dedicated to Italian tenor Enrico Caruso which has been covered by numerous international artists such as Luciano Pavarotti and Julio Iglesias. The version sung by Pavarotti sold over 9 million copies, and another version was a track on Andrea Bocelli's first international album, **Romanza**, which sold over 20 million copies worldwide. This piece is also on Josh Groban's album **Closer**, which sold over 5 million copies in the United States. The song is a tribute to the emblematic opera tenor Enrico Caruso. Maynard Ferguson also covered the song on his album *"Brass Attitude"*, after having previously paid tribute to Caruso with his rendition of *"Vesti la giubba"* (titled as *"Pagliacci"*) on the album **Primal Scream**.

"Caruso" was a single on Dalla's *"DallAmeriCaruso"* album, a live recording of a 1986 tour that included the United States and Canada. *"With his versatile and inexhaustible creativity, which ranged freely between Brazilian, jazz or classical inspirations, Dalla was perfectly synched with one of the highest moments of our musical history,"* wrote Gino Castaldo, a music critic for the Rome newspaper **La Repubblica**. *"He knew the art of the song well, perhaps better than any other in Italy. With him, the melodic tradition became a receptacle for fado, jazz echoes, folk motifs."* He also wrote the music for films, as well as an opera, *"Tosca. Amore disperato,"* (Tosca. Desperate Love), which was inspired by Puccini's opera and had its debut in Rome in 2003. On the morning of 1 March 2012, three days before his 69th birthday, Dalla died from a heart attack, shortly after having breakfast at the hotel where he was staying in Montreux, Switzerland, having performed in the city the night before. An estimated 50,000 people attended his funeral in Bologna. With this said, I invite you to enjoy the music of **Mr. Lucio Dalla....**

Luciano Pavarotti & Lucio Dalla – **Caruso** -- <http://youtu.be/tRGuFM4DR2Y>

Lucio Dalla – **L'anno che verrà** -- <http://youtu.be/9OEwHN9w2H0>

Lucio Dalla – **Anna e Marco** -- <http://youtu.be/F6LaxFJvQ6E>

Lucio Dalla – **Angeli** -- <http://youtu.be/e9Lf6avOwZY>

Lucio Dalla – **Cara** -- <http://youtu.be/R5BosUCpMMM>

Lucio Dalla – **Tu non mi basti mai** -- <http://youtu.be/ez75GMRD4bQ>

Lucio Dalla – **Te voglio bene assai** -- <http://youtu.be/TnJN-HBmBps>

Lucio Dalla – **L'ultima luna** -- <http://youtu.be/1DqWODpj5Yc>

Lucio Dalla – **Notte** -- <http://youtu.be/7hiQJsIqIY>

Lucio Dalla – **Milano** -- http://youtu.be/z2_oVAQibD8

Lucio Dalla – **4/3/43** -- <http://youtu.be/owIEtnXx4JY>

Lucio Dalla & Gegè Telesforo – (improvvisazione) -- <http://youtu.be/x6dExttnq64>

Lucio Dalla Quartet (feat. Stefano Di Battista) – **Blue Monk** -- <http://youtu.be/gfd6ElnpghE>

I hope that you enjoyed this week's offerings and wish you and your love ones a great week....

Sincerely,

Greg Brown

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Gregory Brown
Chairman & CEO
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